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Framing Effects in Japanese Non-final Clauses:
Toward an Optimal Grammar-Pragmatics Interface[*]

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1. Introduction

In Japanese, as in other verb-final languages (including Korean, Tamil, and some Papuan languages, e.g. Tauya), non-final clauses can stand by themselves in discourse, without being followed by the main clause. Some examples are (TE=participial, NODE=reason, NONI=concessive): [1]

(1)   *kocchi-mo saikin isogashikute*
        this.side-also lately be.busy.TE
        'I've been busy lately too-TE [and]'

(2)   *ocha-ga hairimashita-node*
        tea-NOM be.ready.POL.PAST-NODE
        'The tea is ready-NODE [so]'

(3)   *koe-o kaketekurereba itta-noni*
        call-ACC give.BEN.COND go.PAST-NONI
        '(I)'d have gone together if (you) had given (me) a call-NONI [but]'

In these examples, the clause linkage markers *te*, *node* and *noni* are attached to verbs, and they are all syntactically incomplete (thus when (1)-(3) occur as simple independent clauses, the verb forms would be *isogashii, hairimashita*, and *itta*, respectively). However, examination of conversational data shows that they are not mere elliptical utterances and that they have interactionally significant characteristics. These considerations lead us to assume that they form an independent class of grammatical constructions.

These constructions, which I would call *suspended clause constructions* (hence SCCs; cf. Itani 1992; Iguchi 1995; Shirakawa 1995; Ohori 1995), raise an intriguing issue for the theory of clause linkage in that we need to characterize under what pragmatic conditions they occur and what kind of inferential mechanism is at work. Further, in answering these questions, it is expected that we may obtain some insight into the problem of the grammar-pragmatics interface.

2. Discussion

2.1 Some characteristics of SCCs

As mentioned earlier, SCCs are typically marked for sub-ordination, so they are not directly comparable to English connectives such as *and*, *so*, and *but*. The colloquial use of *though*, however, is somewhat similar to SCCs:

(4)   *I don't care about politics, **though**.*

Of course this similarity is only marginal, and there is much to be explored in Japanese SCCs, as we shall see below. To start, let us see that SCCs are neither echo utterances nor co-constructions uttered by two speakers. Here's a discourse fragment (from my archive): [2]

(5)   (A and B are talking about job-hunting in the senior year; C is B's mother)
    A: *daijoobujanai, Y-kun-nara/ nanigeni*
        alright.PRED.PRT.NEG Y-TL-TOP incidentally
        '(he) may be alright, Y./ incidentally (I)'m in the same
        zemi-mo isshoda-shi/ chokochoko kiteru yo/
        seminar-also together.PRED-and very.often come PRT
        'seminar, and/ (he) comes to the campus very often/
        kare-ga shuushoku-shitai-no-wa nee, are mitai,
        he-NOM job-get.VOL-NZ-TOP PRT that MOD
        'the job (he) wants to get is, it seems,
        supootsu-kankee, shinbun toka=
        sports-related press etc.
        'a sports-related (job), like press'
    B: *=aa=*
        ah-huh
        'ah-huh'
    A: *=JRA toka, sore-wa keebadesho/*
        JRA etc. that-TOP horserace.PRED.MOD
        'and say, JRA, that's (the organization for) horserace/
        sooyuuno yaritaindatte
        like.that do.VOL.PRED.COMP
        '(he says he) wants to do that kind of job'

B: *hai*

   INT

   'here you are'

C: *hai, arigato/ shuushoku nee/ shuushoku kiboo deshoo*

   INT thank.you job PRT job want PRED.MOD

   'oh, thanks/ job-hunting, hmm/ will (you) go job-hunting?'

A: *tabun/ demo ima-tte* **kibishiidesu-kara** *nee*

   maybe but now-TOP tough.PRED-KARA PRT

   'maybe/ but now (it) is really tough-KARA [so]'

C: *soo nee*

   yes PRT

   'yes, that's right'

Interestingly, SCCs occur most frequently on TRPs as in the above example, marking the transition of a turn. In (5), A and B are talking about their classmate's job preference, and then C (=B's mother) comes in and asks if A will go job-hunting too (whose intention is indeed what kind of job she wants). A answers by saying 'maybe, but now it is really tough, so...', but there is no statement in the discourse for which the *kara*-marked clause provides a reason. Here the conversational routine is short-circuited, in the sense that a main clause which would follow the suspended reason clause simply doesn't occur. If it did, it would be a direct answer to C's intended question: A cannot be very picky (unlike her classmate). But C gets what A means without the main clause, so she says, 'yes, that's right' showing sympathy. Thus the *kara*-marked clause uttered by A is not really 'suspended' but is smoothly integrated into the flow of discourse.

    Another interesting pragmatic property of SCCs is that they are not mere declarative utterances, but carry directive and expressive functions, for example calling for sympathy, giving direction, or expressing emotion. Thus (1) can be used as an excuse, (2) as a direction, and (3) as a soft reproach. This non-declarative property of SCCs may account for their frequent occurrence at TRPs: utterances with interpersonal functions tend to trigger the switch of the speaker. Example (5) clearly illustrates this point. Here what matters is A's concern about the toughness of the job market. Note that both A's and C's utterances in question both have *nee* at the end, which is known to be among the commonly used utterance-final particles in Japanese. As Cook (e.g. 1989) suggests, one discourse function of *ne(e)* is a request for agreement, and this is what is happening in (5).

    In the following example (from my archive), the reason marker *kara* has a strong connotation of urge for sympathy, whose inferential mechanism is roughly schematized in (6') (for details, cf. Ohori 1995; also notice the suspended use of KEDO which is a marker of counter-expectation):

(6)   (A and B, both graduate students, are talking about TA jobs)

     A: *nani kore?*
        this what
        'what is this?'

     B: *ringu faibu yarette*
        ling 5 do.COMP
        '(they told me) to do Ling. 5'

     A: *nn soo/saisho-wa soo iwareru-no yo*
        hmm so first-TOP so tell.PASS-PRT PRT
        'hmm yea/ first, (everybody) is told so'

     B: *faibu-dake-wa iya-da tsuttanda-kedo na=*
        5-only-TOP no-PRED say.PAST.PRED-KEDO PRT
        'I said I didn't want to do 5-KEDO [but]'

     A: *=watashi-datte konaida soo ittara orijinarii-ni*
        I-TOP[?] earlier so say.TARA originally-DAT
        'I also said so earlier-TARA [then] originally (I) was
        *faibu ni **nattanda-kara***
        5-DAT become.PAST.PRED-KARA
        'assigned to 5-KARA [so]'

(6')   P-KARA, Q ('because P, Q') => P-KARA, ø ('because P, you know what'
      => 'because P, I'm concerned')

In this example, *kara* does not give any reason for any particular event. Rather, *kara* indicates that the content of the clause has a strong concern for the speaker. Hence a more natural translation of A's utterance would be 'Hey look, even I was originally assigned to Ling 5, so it's my concern too'.

    What is the motivation behind this extension of interpretation? Discourse-pragmatically, when people give a reason for an event, they consider that doing so is important to make sense of the situation being talked about. More technically, reason clauses point to a certain set of assumptions against which the relevance of the main assertion is enhanced (cf. Blakemore 1987, 1988). In (5), saying that the job market is tough indicates that it has much to do with the current discourse topic, i.e. the speaker (=A)'s job search. From this background, the hearer (=C) easily infers that A cannot be picky about her job, and that she sees the toughness of job market as her primary concern. But in examples like (6), the main assertion is often unspecifiable, and the hearer is required to interpret the *kara*-marked clause as giving justification to the speaker's emotional commitment to whatever s/he is facing. Schematically, the consequent part of (6'), which originally is a proposition (=Q), becomes vacuous at this point, or it is at best a tautological

assertion, e.g. 'things are as they are'. Here *kara* is not really a connective in the ordinary sense, but indeed seems to be acquiring some of the functions of clause-final discourse particles.

2.2 Framing effects in SCCs

One important generalization about SCCs is that linkage markers which allow suspension are those typically expressing (pseudo-)logical semantic relations (e.g. reason). In contrast, the marker *to*, which is typically used to encode temporal or habitual sequence, does not seem to occur in SCCs:[3]

(7)   ??*shigoto-ga isogashii-to*
        job-NOM be.busy-TO
        ('(I) am so busy with my job-TO [and then]')

To generalize, SCCs involve *inference-intensive* clause linkage markers. Moreover, I would argue that this property is embodied in the construction itself, making the SCC a frame within which the interpretation of a linguistic form is constrained. Let us look at some examples closely.

In Japanese, the marker *shi* is usually used for juxtaposition or weak contrast. Linkage by *shi* also allows a reason reading as well as a temporal reading, depending on the context (in this regard, *shi* is fairly close to English *and* in terms of the possible range of interpretations). The suspended version of *shi*-linkage is given below:

(8)   *watashi-mo ii toshi desu-shi*
        I-also good age PRED-SHI
        'I have become very old-SHI [and]'

What is important is that (8) only has a reason reading, and hence interactionally the hearer is solicited to show sympathy for what the speaker would assert in the given context. Thus, for example, (8) can be used as an excuse for not accepting a request. Now, crucially, example (8) can be interpreted as a reduction of (9), but not of (10):

(9)   *watashi-mo ii toshi desu-shi, kono shigoto-wa dekimasen*
        I-also good age PRED-SHI this job-TOP make.POL.NEG
        'I have become very old, and I can't do this job'

(10) *watashi-mo ii toshi **desu-shi**, otto-wa mamonaku teenen desu*
      I-also good age PRED-SHI husband-TOP soon retire PRED
      'I have become very old, and my husband is retiring soon'

Example (9) involves certain degree of causality, as indicated in the gloss. In contrast, (10) is a mere juxtaposition of two distinct states of affairs. The speaker's being old cannot be a reason for her husband's retirement. In this way, given the suspended frame, a linkage marker which can potentially have more than one interpretation will have a limited range of readings within that frame. In other words, when a non-final clause stands by itself (i.e. is used as a SCC), a *framing effect* arises, enforcing some particular interpretation which would otherwise be only optional.

Likewise, *te*, which is a widely used non-final verb form with a variety of readings (Makino and Tsutsui 1986, for example, list sequentiality, two states of something, reason, means, contrast, and unexpectedness), mainly has a reason reading in the suspended frame, as shown in example (1). In addition, *te* in the following example is used as an emphatic marker, whose English translation would require supplementing the gloss '...which makes me so impressed'.

(11) *kon'nani rippa-ni **natte***
      this.much respectable-DAT become.TE
      '(you)'ve become such a respectable figure-TE [and]'

Here too, we can clearly observe the framing effect of SCCs, i.e. the superimposition of inference-intensive readings and the endowment of interpersonal functions (there are other instances of utterance-final *te*, but in this paper I will not deal with them, since they form separate constructions from SCCs). The foregoing examples show that while non-final clauses are typically associated with background information, they express important discourse material when they occur in a suspended frame.

From these considerations, it could be safely established that SCCs form a grammatical construction in their own right. The generalization obtained from the above discussion can be summarized as follows:[4]

(12) When non-final clauses occur in SCCs, they tend to have inference-intensive readings. That is, put into the SCC frame, the possible range of interpretations of the clause-linking form is constrained by the constructional frame.

Let us turn to broader implications of this generalization for the grammar-pragmatics interface.

2.3 Grammatical constructions in pragmatic theory

The case of SCCs suggests that, in order to account for their occurrence systematically, we need some way to represent linguistic knowledge as formulated in (12), whose more schematic representation is given in (12'). If a linkage marker is neutral as to whether it is inference-intensive or not, as in the case of *shi*, LINK inherits the information <Inference intensive> from the constructional template of the SCC.

(12') CONST: Suspended Clause

$$
\begin{bmatrix}
\text{SynCat} & \text{<Cl + dependent} \\
& : \\
& \quad\text{- embedded>} \\
\text{SemRel} & \text{<Inference-intensive>} \\
\text{PragEff} & \text{<Interpersonal>} \\
\\
[& \qquad [\ldots\text{CLAUSE}\ldots] \qquad\qquad\qquad\quad -\text{LINK}\,]\,\#
\end{bmatrix}
$$

The conventional wisdom in linguistic theory says that our linguistic knowledge consists of highly abstract (and presumably universal) principles coupled with a set of lexical items. But this view is untenable in view of the fact that there are linguistic generalizations such as (12) that can be only made with reference to the notion of grammatical construction as a structured pairing of form and meaning. Construction-based knowledge includes instructions for utterance interpretation associated with a particular morpho-syntactic constellation. In this respect, SCCs offer a strong case for the construction-centered theory of grammar (e.g. Fillmore, Kay, O'Connor 1988; Zwicky and Pullum 1991; Goldberg 1995), as long as one holds that the goal of grammar is to model optimal pairing of form and meaning.

At the same time, pragmatics also seems to benefit from the employment of grammatical constructions as a theoretical construct, since it eases the division of labor in the treatment of non-truth conditional meanings. Admittedly, this is not a new idea. Ever since Grice (1975), non-truth conditional aspects of meaning associated with particular linguistic forms have been treated under the heading of conventional implicatures, although the main concern of pragmatic theory has been the characterization of over-arching principles of communication. The present study gives support to the postulation of constructional templates as bearers of such meaning, providing a way to link grammar and pragmatics seamlessly.

3. Concluding remarks

The general implication of this study is summarized as follows. Japanese SCCs embody particular procedures for interpretation, namely preference for inference-intensive readings and reinforcement of inter-personal functions. The Relevance-theoretic account of connectives as procedures for interpretation may be right, but to deal with the *conditioned variation* of interpretation as given in (12), pragmatics needs an elaborate body of knowledge consisting of grammatical constructions besides logical form and higher-order principles.

In addition, two points may be mentioned here which I have deliberately kept aside in this paper but deserve a few words from a typological interest. First, SCCs provide yet another piece of evidence for the untenability of the coordination-subordination dichotomy, which has been amply demonstrated in recent functional-typological studies. Second, SCCs exemplify the importance of clause-final position as a locus of grammaticalization in Japanese (and possibly other verb-final and clause-chaining languages).[5] It appears that forms of various origins drift toward pragmatic particles (i.e. tend to bear interpersonal and/or textual functions) clause-finally. Here two examples are given, both from complement constructions (also cf. Okamoto 1995 for the pragmaticization of clause-final nominal elements):

(13)   *dare-mo tasuke-ya **shinai-toyuu***
        anyone-PRT help-PRT do.NEG-COMP
        'nobody would help (me)-COMP'

(14)   *sono chotto-ga **nagainda mon***
        that a.little-NOM long.PRED thing [?]
        'that little step was quite tiresome-THING [?]'

In (13), *toyuu* (< *to* as COMP proper and *yuu* 'say', which originally modified a content noun such as *hanashi* and *wake*, both meaning 'story', making up a complex NP) is yet another type of suspended clause, and here a part of complement structure is used to express the speaker's detachment. In the above example, the speaker is reporting her own experience, but by adding *toyuu*, she is conveying that information as if it were hearsay. I am inclined to call this use of *toyuu anti-evidential* as it purposefully obscures the source of information. In (14), the abstract noun *mono* (reduced to *mon*) has almost become a pragmatic particle, strengthening the speaker's assertion. The study of the exact mechanism of this drift will shed light on the process of pragmatically-motivated emergence of grammatical categories. The closer examination of SCCs from this perspective,

together with the clearer elucidation of inferential processes, will be among our future tasks.

Notes

[1] Glossing abbreviations are as follows: ACC(usative), BEN(efactive), COMP(lementizer), DAT(itve), INT(erjection), MOD(ality), NEG(ative), NOM(inative), NZ(=nominalizer), PASS(ive), POL(ite), PRED(ication), PRT(= particle), TL(=title), TOP(ic), VOL(itional). Linkage markers are left unglossed. Detailed morphological boundaries are not given, and when a Japanese expression coresponds to more than one word in English, dots are used instead of spaces. Elements which are not expressed in Japanese (e.g. subject NPs) are in parentheses in the English translation. Romanization is broadly phonetic.

[2] In this example, the marker *shi* is simply glossed 'and', but the matter becomes more complicated in some contexts, as we see below.

[3] Seiko Fujii (p.c.) suggested that *to*-marked clauses can be suspended if the predicate is in the negative form:

(i) *hayaku **ikanai-to***

  soon go.NEG-TO

  '(I) have to go soon'

But in fact, this case exemplifies another type of suspended construction, which may be considered a conventionalized idiom fragment. Thus (i) is a reduced form of (ii), where the expression following the *to*-marked clause is not really a full clause involving independent participants and actions:

(ii) *hayaku **ikanai-to** ikenai*

  soon go.NEG-TO be.alright.NEG

  lit. 'if (I) don't go soon, (it) won't be alright'

In contemporary Japanese, *V-nai-to-ikenai* forms an idiomatic expression for modality (more specifically, that of necessity), alongside *V-nakereba [-naranai]* (V-NEG.COND[-become.NEG]) and *V-nakute-wa[-naranai]* (V-NEG.TE-PRT[-become.NEG]). In colloquial speech, *V-nakereba* is reduced to *V-nakerya* and further to *V-nakya*, and *V-nakute-wa* is reduced to *V-nakucha*. Unlike these examples, the SCCs under consideration in this study do not derive from idiomatic expressions.

[4] The "inconsequential" construction in Papuan languages seems to share some of the features given in (12). Macdonald (1989) gives examples from Tauya, where "inconsequential clauses...can occur alone as grammatical sentences, despite their status as subordinate clauses and their status as dislocations" (pp. 242-243). However, what sort of framing effect is associated with inconsequentials is yet to be ascertained.

[5] An interesting point, which came up from the floor at the time of presentation, was that the clause-initial position can also be a locus of pragmaticization, as exemplified by Romance *si*. Hence it may be speculated that clause edges tend to be loci of pragmaticization, especially the exteriors of the verb.

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